

NewsNotes



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A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF U.S. NEWSWIRE

Mary Dolan, editor

AN INTERVIEW WITH N.Y. TIMES BUREAU CHIEF CRAIG WHITNEY

On Dec. 8, 1986, Craig R. Whitney, 43, became Washington bureau chief of the New York Times. Mr. Whitney is a veteran Timesman and a native of Westborough, Mass., with a degree in French history and literature from Harvard. Recently, USN asked him about his background and his new position.

USN: Can you tell us what you like and perhaps, dislike about working with Washington press secretaries?

CW: I'm still too new to tell you. I haven't even met Marlin Fitzwater yet. Even so, I don't deal with press secretaries individually in my position.

USN: How does somebody become Washington bureau chief of the Times?

CW: Well, I can tell you how it happened to me. I've worked for the Times since 1965, with the exception of a three-year tour in the Navy -- 1966-69. After the Navy, I worked in New York on general assignment. In 1971, I began nine years of service in foreign bureaus: Saigon, Bonn and then Moscow. Since 1980 I've worked in New York as deputy foreign editor, foreign editor and most recently as assistant managing editor.

USN: How did you get started in journalism?

CW: In college I wrote for the Worcester Telegram. But, I clerked for Times columnist James Reston here in D.C. in my first job out of college. He still has a clerk to this day.

USN: What do you like best about your current job?

CW: It's a great job. It's fun, I like being in the middle of the hottest story going. As bureau chief in Bonn, I ran my secretary and a couple of messengers. In D.C. we're a staff of 68 people. It's like having your own newspaper.

USN: What is the hottest story going? The Iran/Contra investigation?

CW: Well, actually, the upcoming election campaign is becoming the major story. Johnny Apple is our chief Washington correspondent in charge of campaigns. But the Iran/Contra story is the most fun.

USN: After four months on the job, what changes have you made?

CW: Changes in assignment. I'm trying to maximize the experience of the writers to get the most out of them, trying to achieve a better match between story and reporter to strengthen the bureau.

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Craig Whitney
N.Y. Times bureau chief

USN: Can you describe the daily procedure of deciding the next day's stories, especially the front page?

CW: In the morning deputy news editor Judith Martin prepares a schedule of stories for the day. By 3:45 I prepare a summary of stories which look good for the front page. At 5, I participate in an editorial conference with New York and solidify page one.

(continued)

WASHINGTON NEWSROOM UPDATE

Michael Clements has joined the Detroit News from the Rochester (N.Y.) Democrat & Chronicle to cover the Michigan delegation.

At U.S. News & World Report, Michael Kramer, formerly of New York magazine, is new chief political correspondent. Robert Bork Jr. joins the staff as associate editor. Former Newsweek staffer Jerry Buckley becomes senior editor. Julie Dear, former senior editor at USN&WR, now writes for the Washington Post health section.

Stew Powell is the new national security correspondent for Hearst Newspapers.

Jim Wolf is the new Reuter correspondent covering the Senate.

David Lauter, formerly of the National Law Review, now covers

Congress for the LA Times. Bob Sexter has moved to the Chicago bureau.

Marsha Ginsberg joins the Hearst bureau as correspondent for the San Francisco Examiner.

At the Wall Street Journal, Jerry Seib and Barbara Rosewicz are coming to D.C. from the Middle East. Seib will cover the White House and Rosewicz will have a general beat.

As of May 11, June Kronholz will take over as WSJ deputy bureau chief; Deputy bureau chief Walt Mossberg will cover international trade and finance; Art Pine will cover agriculture, and Al Karr will exchange the agriculture beat for labor.

Correction: The new news editor at Knight Ridder was incorrectly identified in our last update. He is Doug Clifton.

WHITNEY

USN: The paper's deadline?

CW: 5:00 in principle, but sometimes that slips by.

USN: As a resident of Washington, what kind of job do you think the local papers do covering D.C.?

CW: Well presently I'm a resident of Brooklyn, but I plan to move down to D.C. soon with my wife and two children. But you can't work in the Washington area without reading the local papers. Much of what the [Washington] Times does

is very interesting -- worth reading. They get scoops, Overall The Post offers more thorough coverage.

USN: What book are you reading at the moment?

CW: Sam Donaldson's "Hold On, Mr. President".

USN: If you were not Washington bureau chief of the Times, what would you like to be?

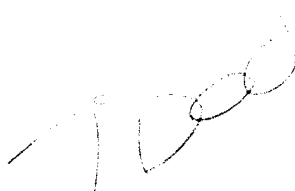
CW: (without hesitation) A concert organist.

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